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A Campaigner for Lincoln by
Ervin S. Chapman

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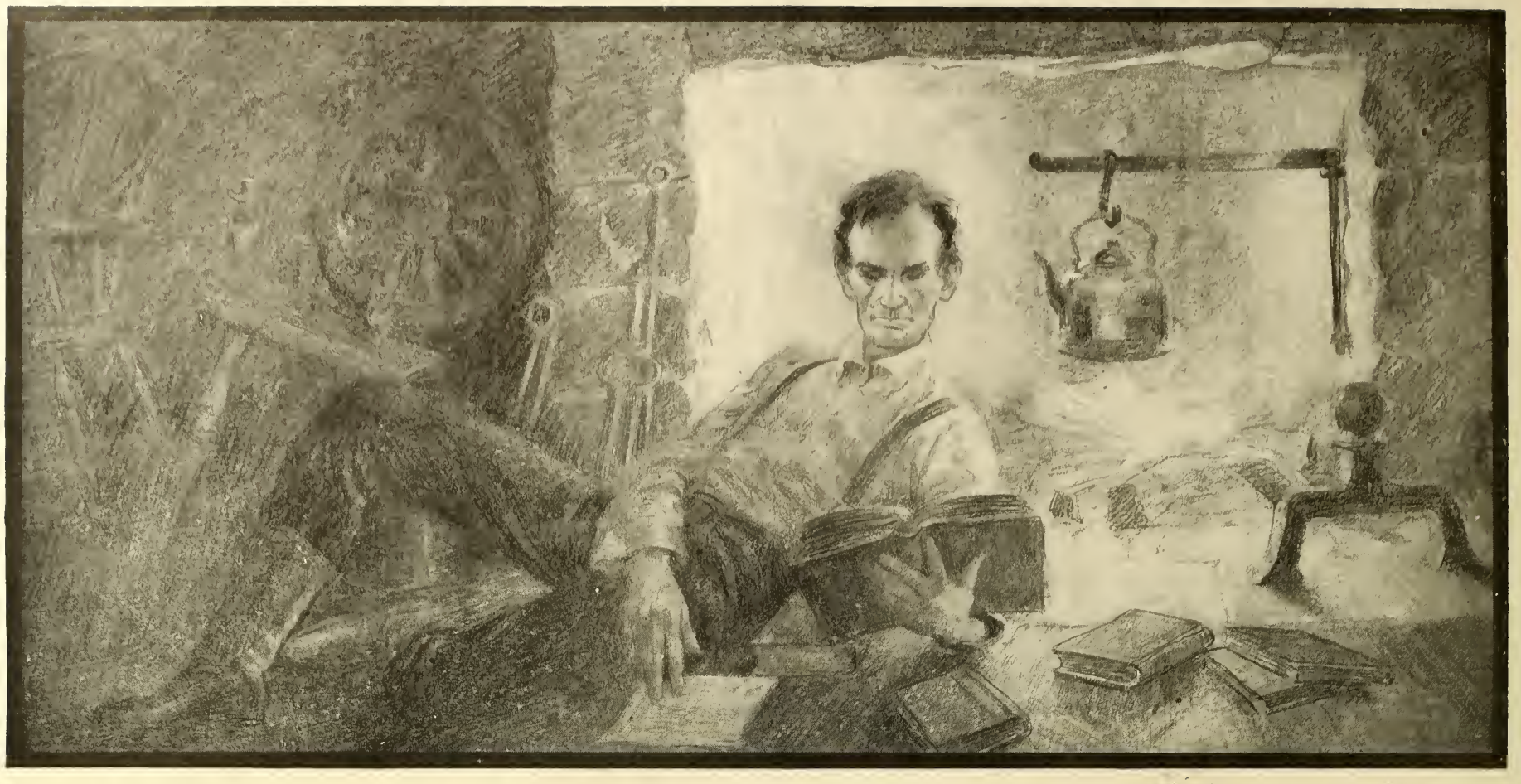

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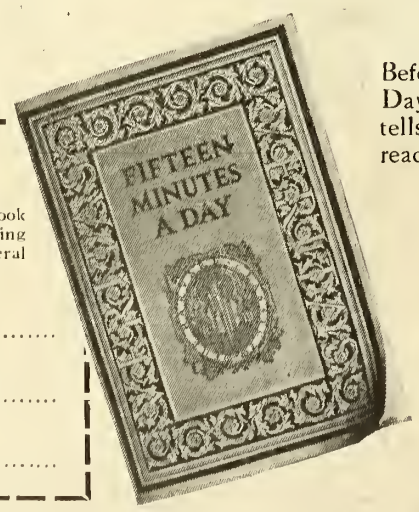

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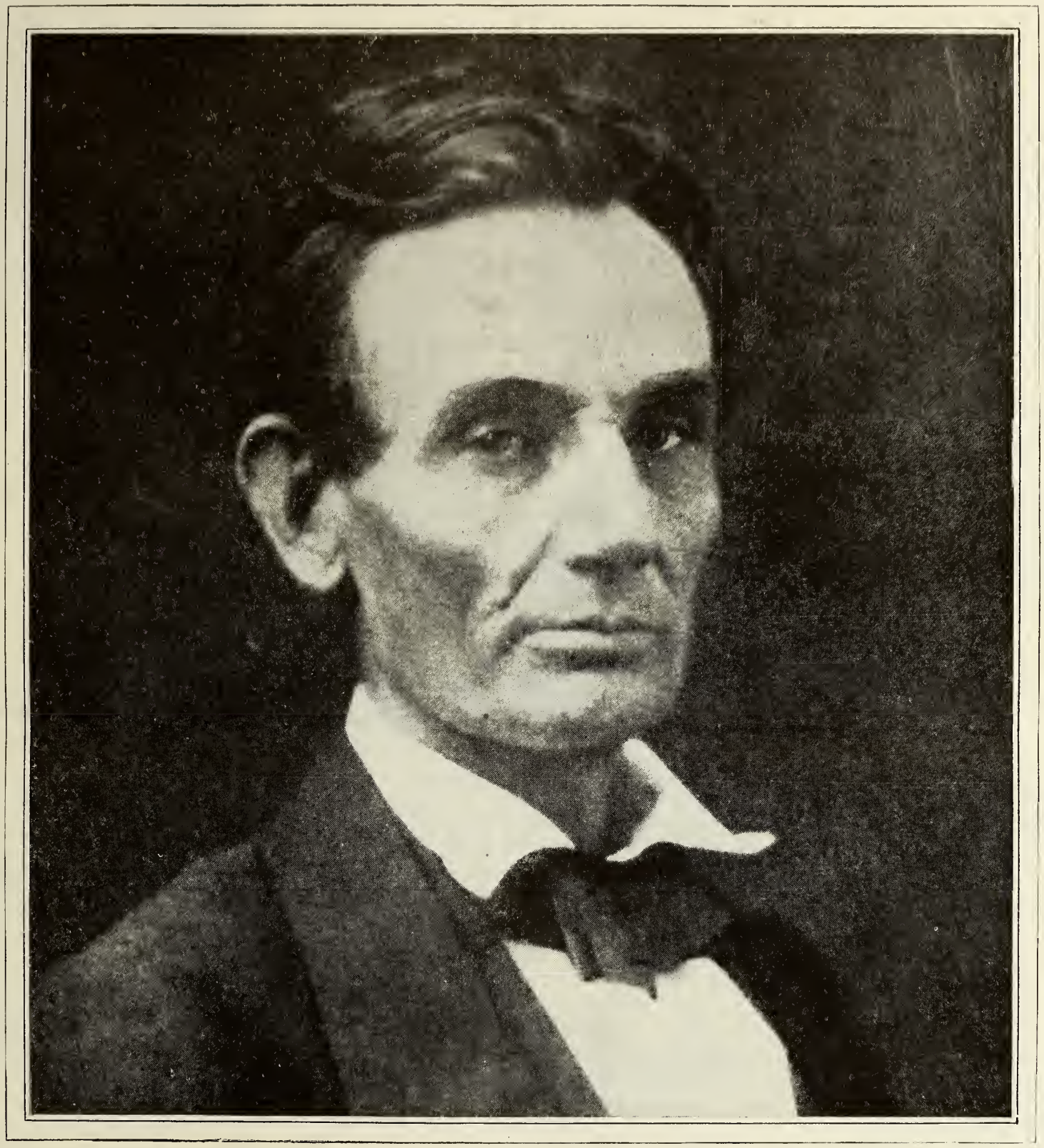


The best of the early photographs of Abraham Lincoln is this one, made by Hesler in Chicago, 1858. This copy is from an original print owned by Wm. Lloyd Garrison

A Campaigner for Lincoln

By Ervin S. Chapman

Photographs from the collection of Frederick Hill Meserve

Here speaks one of the last living voices among men who knew President Lincoln. Dr. Chapman not only knew him, but stumped the country for him as a boy of twenty-one. In this article he answers the chief questions asked him by people who are curious to know about the greatest American—not from the history books—but directly from a man who worked with him and knew him intimately

So far as I know there is no other man now living who took as active a part in Lincoln's presidential campaigns as I did. I made 100 speeches for him in his first campaign. I am eighty-three years old. I was twenty-one when I took the stump for Lincoln. Later on I was private secretary to Representative James M. Ashley of Ohio, who was associated with Greeley, Sumner, Seward, and others, who were Lincoln's bitter opponents. They were the radicals of that day. Mr. Ashley, however, had no personal hatred of Lincoln, and so became a kind of go-between of the radical group and the President.

One day Mr. Ashley went to the White House on an important errand. When he was seated with the President, Mr. Lincoln, instead of going directly at the matter at issue, began to tell a story. Mr. Ashley jumped to his feet. "Mr. President," he said, "this is no time for story-telling! I am in earnest! I have come with a message that brooks no delay. I must have an answer."

Mr. Lincoln was not at all disturbed. "Sit down, Mr. Ashley," he said quietly. "I know you are in earnest. I know of no one who is more so. I am in earnest too, but the life I lead would kill me if I did not relax the tension by story-telling." Lincoln ordered coffee, and they sat and talked for three hours. When Mr. Ashley reported to his colleagues he said: "Abraham Lincoln is in deadly earnest. We must cooperate with him at all costs."

It was the marvelous personality of Lincoln that won men to him. No one came into intimate touch with him who did not go from his presence "converted." The powerful personality

of the man went out from him as a living force, and no one could withstand him when he said a thing must be done.

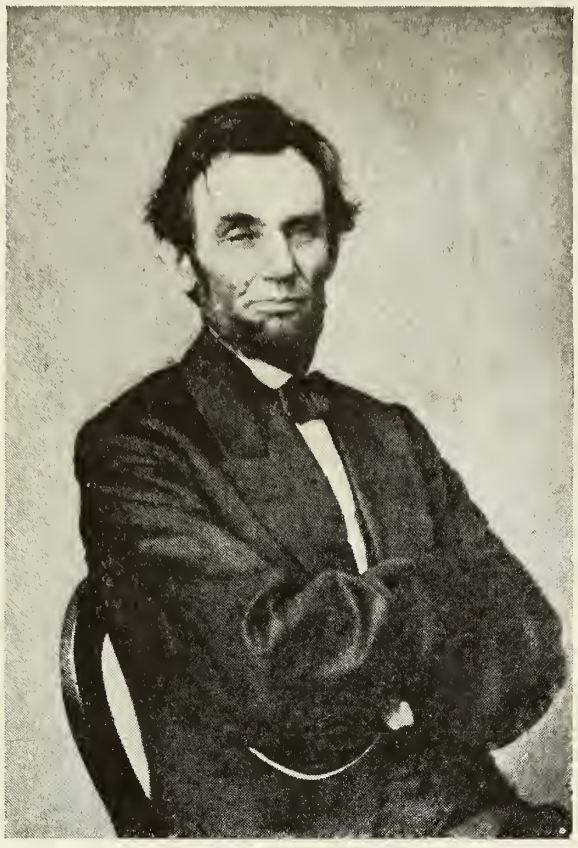
Horace Greeley felt this force. Greeley was considered something of a pest in those days. Once when he was asked to see Lincoln about a certain measure, he replied: "I can't. I have to fight him, and I can't fight him if I meet him."

I am eighty-three, but I remember as though it were yesterday the first time I saw Lincoln. It was at a reception at the White House. The room was crowded and the guests passed down a narrow aisle to be received. At the end of the aisle stood Lincoln, towering head and shoulders above the crowd. You know he was six feet four inches tall, but he looked taller; I think it was because of his thick mass of black hair that stood up from his head. Seldom does a native American have such black hair; it was black as night and remarkably thick.

How anyone who has ever been in the presence of Lincoln could call him homely is something I cannot understand. He had but one irregular feature—a protruding lip. Place a slip of paper over the lower part of the face in any large picture of Lincoln, and you will see what I mean. The nose, the forehead, the shape of the head, are rugged, handsome. He had deep gray eyes, wonderfully expressive. Eliminate that protruding lower lip and you have a face that is exceedingly handsome. And when you had seen Lincoln more than once you forgot the one imperfect feature.

I never was conscious of it after that first meeting, although I saw Lincoln many times and studied his face with the diligence of a young enthusiast. But the recollections of my first impression of his face assure me that his heavy lower lip was responsible for the belief that Lincoln was extremely homely. But as Bartlett, the sculptor, says: "It is to be remembered that the right kind of a thick lower lip is a physiognomical mark of sensitiveness and tenderness of nature."

The belief seems to be widespread that Lincoln was careless in his dress and slovenly in appearance. Nothing could be farther from the truth. It may be true that when he wore homespun in his youth and early manhood, Lincoln looked ungainly, as any young man does in ill-fitting clothes. But on every occasion on which I saw him he was as neat as a pin, and no criticism could be justly made of his clothes.



From a very rare photograph by Mr. Walker of the Treasury Department, taken in 1865

From a photograph of Mrs. Lincoln taken early in the first administration

I have often seen Mrs. Lincoln with her husband at the White House and at public worship. I believe the world will never know the full extent of its indebtedness to her

About Mrs. Lincoln

AT the reception I have referred to, Mrs. Lincoln was at the President's side. The world knows less than it should of Mary Todd Lincoln. Three things combined to deprive her of the place in public esteem to which she was entitled. She was of Southern birth and had several close relatives in the Confederate army; few social functions were held at the White House in those troubled times, and so the public had little opportunity to meet her and learn of her gracious and charming qualities; and the shade of Lincoln's tragic death resulted in the loss of her reason.

Mrs. Lincoln was a beautiful woman, although she was rather stout. Her hair was dark. I have often seen her with her husband at the White House and at public worship. I believe the world will never know the full extent of its indebtedness to Mary Todd Lincoln for what Lincoln was and for what he was permitted to accomplish. She had received an excellent education and was in every way fitted for helping companionship with a man of Mr. Lincoln's tastes and talents. Her affections were ardent. She was passionately devoted to her family and her friends. She believed in her husband, and foresaw for him a distinguished career long before others recognized his worth. Her high ambition and unconquerable will assisted in holding him to his task in spite of difficulties and discouragements before which, without her, even his tenacious nature might have failed. They were devoted to each other, and neither without the other would have been complete.

There were three things, aside from his wonderful personality, that, it has seemed to me, made Lincoln great:

First: He was always fair: he gave everyone a hearing.

Second: He would yield when it was reasonable to yield.

Third: When he could not yield he was adamant and no one could turn him from his purpose.

Many of the men Lincoln had to deal with were most difficult to handle. He always tried to work with them without antagonizing them. It is probable that no one ever heeded more the admonition of the Scriptures to "agree with thine adversary quickly." But when it was necessary to force through a measure he could command. I recall an instance of this which was much talked of at the time. Lincoln sent a paper to Secretary Stanton during a session of Congress. Stanton read it and threw it aside with an exclamation. When his messenger returned, Mr. Lincoln asked what Mr. Stanton had said. The messenger hesitated and then blurted out:

"Stanton said you were a damned fool."

"Those were his words?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, Stanton is almost always right," said Lincoln. "I will go and see him."

He did, and when he stood before Stanton he said: "Stanton, this thing must be done."

"I won't do it, Mr. Lincoln."

"Yes, you will do it," replied Lincoln very quietly. Stanton did it.

Lincoln always gave the other side a fair chance. And he sometimes argued on the opposite side to his belief in order to draw out another's reasons.

When the emancipation question was under consideration, a company of ministers from Chicago came to Washington to insist that Lincoln issue the proclamation. In the course of the interview he talked so strongly against the proclamation that his visitors, although they brought their best arguments to bear, left feeling that probably it would not be issued. And while they talked with Lincoln, the proclamation, already written out, lay in a drawer of the President's desk within two feet of where they sat.

The first man to whom he read the proclamation was his pastor, Dr. Gurley. The second was Vice President Hannibal Hamlin. Hamlin was on his way to take the train to Philadelphia when Lincoln asked: "Where are you going?"

"To Philadelphia," replied Hamlin.

"No, you're not; you're going with me to the Soldiers' Home."

Hamlin went, of course, and that evening Lincoln read the proclamation to him, and they spent half the night talking it over.

In a carriage on the way to a funeral he next spoke of the proclamation to two Cabinet members. Later it was laid before the entire Cabinet. But two months passed before it was issued. And durand they spent half the night talking it over.

I have spoken of Lincoln's habit of conciliating his adversaries. But he could be severe and harsh at times. That side of him showed itself only when he had to deal with hypocrites, those who pretended to be with him, but whose hearts and interests were with the enemy. He had no mercy for hypocrites, but any case, however trivial, that had real merit always won his consideration.

When Lincoln made an address it was so simple, so plain, that sometimes it seemed at the moment commonplace. His second inaugural address seemed, while I listened to it, not greatly remarkable. But I found that every word had been burned into my memory.

My duties at the time led me to pass and repass, many, many times a day, the east portal of the Capitol, where they were building the platform for the inaugural ceremonies. I studied that platform from all angles, and I knew just the spot where Lincoln would stand. I picked out a place where I could stand directly in front of him and about twenty feet away. I was entitled to a seat on the platform, but I wanted to be where I could see the President's face and hear every word of his message.

"I Feel the Thrill Yet"

THE 4th of March, 1865, was ushered in with a drenching rain. Nevertheless I took my place at seven o'clock in the morning. The address was to be delivered at one o'clock. I stood absolutely alone for two and a half hours. I paid dearly for that drenching, but it was worth all that it cost. By ten o'clock others joined me, and after that the crowd grew rapidly until, by noon, 50,000 men and women were shivering in the drenching rain, and either crowding to gain better positions or stubbornly holding to those they had secured.

Chief Justice Chase escorted Lincoln to his place on the platform. As a boy, Salmon P. Chase, then governor of Ohio, had been my ideal. He was a man of great mental attainments and culture; he was descended from a long line of aristocrats and born to leadership and distinction. But as he walked arm in arm with Lincoln through the great crowd on the platform, I saw my youthful ideal overtopped by the plain American. Not a whit less handsome was Lincoln; in bearing and composure he was fully the equal of the Chief Justice; his presence was magnificent. It was

(*Continued on page* 30)

* *

our pygmy world—the bandbox bungalow, the pathetic square of black dots that had once been a banana patch, the landing like a centipede thrusting its body into the fair face of the Pacific. "It's not a bad old spot, you know," mused Tomlin sentimentally. His words echoed the thoughts in each one of our minds. Malita was very dear now that she was slipping from us.

"If we can only stick it out a day or two," Rands suggested, "we might be able to slip down in the night and vamoose in the launch. What's the matter with Samoa or Tonga?"

"It's the Government," droned Webb, his every word pulverizing Rands's ideas like a sledge hammer. "It's a man hunt. Ever seen a Government man hunt? They've got us labeled and pigeonholed in their old barn at Suva by this time, and wherever we go, whatever we do, they'll be somewhere in the background. Slow, but—oh, lor'!—sure."

There was deathly silence as the two launches came to rest, and spilled their pygmy people onto the landing. Sterling led the procession to the bungalow, and, without hesitation, passed inside, followed by the Government. The police squatted in a formal row in the compound, while one of their number remained with the launch.

"That's that," remarked Tomlin.

"Rats in a trap!" murmured Nares, presumably to add to the general gayety.

Presently the three white men came out, the police sprang to their feet, and the entire cortège spread itself over Malita.

But there was surprisingly little fun. Throughout the brazen day we lay on our ledge in agonized suspense. No one came near us. We were hungry, aching, and, above all, thirsty.

Toward evening the party returned along the beach from the direction of the native village. Sterling and the Government took up their quarters in my bungalow, and the police disposed themselves among the *buris* (outhouses) in the compound. A yellow, homelike glow sprang into being at the living-room window, and we pictured the pink young man telling the Government, over a glass of amber liquid, that something or other was "topping."

Then it rained—the warm, penetrating douche of the tropics.

Webb sat with his feet dangling over the ledge like overweighted pendulums, the lining of the white pulp that had ance been his sola topee emitting green cataracts down his sodden ducks.

"This will go on, and on, and on until they get us," he rumbled. "They've written a 'report' on their first day's 'investigations.' There'll be another tomorrow, and another the day after that, until they'll be able to write down, very neatly: 'On January 26, at 10 a. m., the prisoners were discovered—' Pah!" he bellowed, and scrambled to his feet. "What's the use?"

"What are you going to do?" inquired some one.

"Go down and give myself up," he retorted. "A cell's dry."

And—would you believe it?—we all followed him. Like a flock of sodden sheep we trailed down that hillside and up the bungalow path. What we must have looked like standing in pools of our own making on the veranda, I have no idea, though I believe Sterling has.

WEBB marched in on a homely little scene. The Government was leaning over a plan of Malita outspread on the table. Sterling was sprawled in my favorite chair, blowing smoke rings from a noble-looking cigar and staring dreamily at the ceiling. "Where on earth have you been?" he demanded at sight of the apparition.

"Little pleasure excursion up the hillside," said Webb. "What are you going to do with us?"

"Sorry," Sterling apologized, and poured out five ample tots of a brand that was new to me but uncommonly mellow. "Hadn't you better change?" he suggested.

We changed in stony silence.

"And now," he said, "I want to thank you for the top—splendid time you gave me, and apologize for my hasty departure. That room—"

"We'd rather you wouldn't be funny about it," said Webb. "Come to the point."

"Very well," agreed Sterling; "what about those pineapples?"

"Pineapples?"

"Yes; you're not going to tell me you fellows went through the agonies you must have suffered without there being something in this pineapple idea?"

"Who are these?" demanded Webb, suddenly indicating the gaping Government with a hairy hand.

"Surveyors," said Sterling. "Who did you think they were?"

"That doesn't matter," said Webb; "but—"

A pained expression passed over Sterling's pink face. "You're not going to let me down," he wailed—"after me buying the island for you, mortgages and all?" . . .

And to this day Sterling cannot be brought to believe that Webb's intentions with the rope on the veranda were serious. The argument invariably causes one to say: "Top—splendid!" and the other to swing an enormous foot, when we forgather on the veranda of a large white bungalow overlooking the Malita Pineapple Estates Incorporated.

Portland—Built on a Rock

Continued from page 22

to lift the stumblingblock from their path?

Nevertheless, civics is fashionable in Portland.

The Women's Literary Union, a club of a thousand members with a handsome home, has started off half a dozen solid movements over its teacups. The Rossini Club, bringing to the city each year a program of notable recitals, serves the whole population in its plans. The Portland Society of Art, under the wisest of administrations, makes its endowment serve the people first and the connoisseur afterward. The Kotzschmar Memorial Organ, a truly noble musical instrument, is the base of a year-round calendar of concerts presenting soloists of the highest rank at prices within reach of everybody.

AN inherent patriotism is alive here. The city is informed, as the old phrase has it, with the spirit of America. If that is what the commercial secretary had in his mind, he is altogether justified.

Maine is not so reserved as Massachusetts. Her men and women face the flag when they salute it, as do the men and women of Massachusetts; but in Maine they salute it with glistening eyes. If they were put to the test, I do not fear in the least that in 1921 the people of Portland would hesitate to make the choice their ancestors made in 1774.

"What of 1774?" you ask.

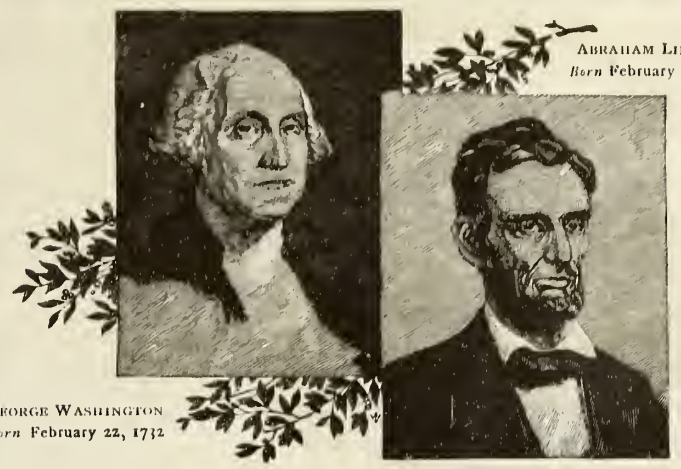
In 1774 the British closed the port of Boston. New England's second port might then have made great profit through her neighbor's misfortune by being only a little patient with the enemy officers.

Were the Portland folk thus patient? Was Yankee thrift dominant over loyalty in the ranks of liberty?

Portland folk were so patient that they rang a muffled peal from the belfry of the old First Parish Church to admonish the less resolute of the little town to keep upper lips stiff and backbones straight.

What if, for this and "other rebellious acts," the town was bombarded and burned? The Portland of that day was bravely true to her Mayflower heritage. So, in the estimation of one who has been happy among her people, is she bravely true to-day.

. . .



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A Campaigner for Lincoln

Continued from page 6

a glorious sight to a young American. I feel the thrill of it yet.

And as Mr. Lincoln stepped upon the platform there was suddenly a wide opening in the thick black clouds above us and the sunshine flooded through. The melancholy features of the President became radiant. He looked on the rifting of the clouds as a good omen, and next day spoke of it to a visitor. "It was glorious; it made my heart jump," he said.

For fifteen minutes Lincoln sat there while the people cheered. Then, without a word being spoken, without any introduction or call for silence, his tall form unfolded itself. As he towered above the throng his proportions seemed colossal.

Four years before Lincoln had begun his inaugural address with the words "Fellow Citizens." This time he said "Fellow Countrymen," and the meaning he put into his words thrilled like an electric shock. He did not begin in a low voice and work up to a climax, but hurled the salutation to the hills. His voice was a high tenor, and its carrying power was marvelous. Even the stragglers on the outskirts of the crowd heard the words, and there came from all around cries of "Good! Good!"

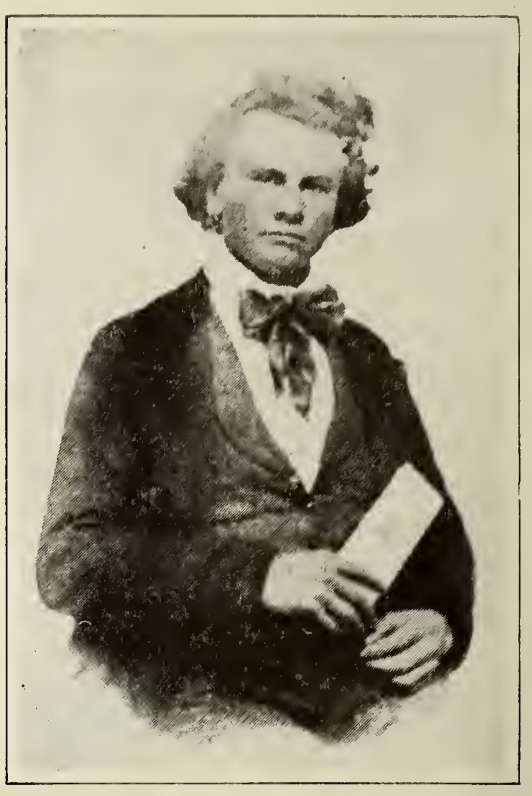
He stood tense; he made no gestures. Only when he came to those now familiar words, "with malice toward none, with charity for all," his body swayed in rhythm with the words. He was applauded but once.

The next day, bound for the West, I bought a newspaper and turned to the account of the inaugural. I found that I could repeat every word of the address from memory. It had impressed itself indelibly on my heart and brain, and even to-day, after more than fifty years, I still remember the greater part of it, although I have never studied it nor refreshed my memory by referring to it in print.

Impressive as the scene was during the address, that which followed as Lincoln took the oath of office was more so. The Chief Justice, holding the Bible in his left hand, raised his right hand, and the President, with his right hand lifted in like manner, placed his left hand reverently upon the open volume, and repeated the oath of office.

When with special emphasis he had uttered the concluding words—"So help me, God"—Mr. Lincoln bowed his head and kissed the Bible; and as he did so his lips touched the 27th and 28th verses of the 5th chapter of Isaiah, which read:

"None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken: Whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind."



Here is Dr. Chapman as he appeared when he made 100 speeches for Lincoln in the campaign of 1860

Cavalier or Cave Man

Continued from page 19

she explains, and it would break her mother's heart—but the count is a man of the world. Once she accepted attentions from a married man, and even went to his château one afternoon while his wife was away. He made violent love to her, and she was saved only by the fact that she suddenly began to laugh at the sight of his gray hair. She wonders if the count can believe her story. He answers ruefully that he can.

Of course, from the moment of this scene on until the end of the play, it is quite evident that the count has fallen desperately in love with the beautiful Naima. And she with him. Fortunately the boy discovers in time that he and Naima have never really been in love. He realizes that it is his father for whom she cares, and he resigns in favor of the count. But De Larzac, in spite of his many past triumphs, is by no means sure that he can qualify as a successful suitor for the young and beautiful Naima. He fears his age. The parish priest seeks to comfort him, but is not altogether successful.

"Tell me," asks the count, "if I should come into your church with a young girl and ask you to unite us, could you pronounce the nuptial benediction and still keep a straight face?"

"I, Monsieur le Comte, why, I should be transported with joy!" exclaims the priest.

"Despite my age?" queries De Larzac.

"Your age? Do you forget that, when he espoused Ruth, Boaz had just entered into his one hundred and sixteenth year?"

This does not quite console De Larzac, and when he asks Naima to marry him he is horrified when she puts both her hands to her face.

"My God!" he cries. "She laughs!"

But, as a matter of fact, she does nothing of the sort. She weeps, and the play ends happily.

Anyway, Its Manners Are Good

"TRANSPLANTING JEAN" is a light play of no great consequence. Much of its observation is true, but most of it is superficial. On the other hand, it is a welcome addition to the season because it is smooth and brisk and bright. It is smart in the best sense of the word. Probably the theme which it enfolds is a commonplace in the French theatre, but the point of view is so different from our own that it seems new. Arthur Byron is very agreeable and richly humorous as the count, even though he never seems particularly French, and Margaret Lawrence is delightful as Naima. One may object to the morals of "Transplanting Jean," but he cannot impeach its manners.